

asked questions as to did your daddy and mom lose their job.

People who thought they made it into the middle class, which is the economic heartbeat of this great Nation, moved into communities with higher rents or higher expenses in terms of their homes; and then they were hit by this economic nightmare. Through no fault of their own, they lost their jobs, their homes, their savings, their hope. And they are out there, and we are saying that they don't want to work, that they enjoy being unemployed?

You know, this great Nation has the Constitution as its foundation, but there's something that's not written there, and that is, if you can make your way to America, you can improve, not just your status, but the status of your kids and your grandkids.

Something has happened with this dream as it becomes a nightmare, and it has to do with disparity of the income because if you are born into poverty, chances of getting out of it in the United States of America is far less than in some other countries. That's not us. That's not what we believe in.

And no one is asking for a class war. We're talking about a class in understanding the economy of this great Nation. Less than 1 percent of Americans own 42 percent of America's wealth. And worse than being poor, more Americans who thought they reached the middle class wake up each and every day and find out that they're back into poverty.

Can't we find some way to realize that this is not a party issue, that these are the principles of the United States of America?

Don't we know that these debates that we're having as to who can be the meanest and most ridiculous is causing us, as a Nation, to lose the principles? And aren't these principles how do we treat the lesser of our brothers and sisters in this country? Isn't the question of how we treat our children, is that gone out of the window? Our aged, our sick and those in poverty?

Isn't there something when middle class people have to watch the cash register when they're paying out at the counter to make certain that they didn't pick up more than they can pay for?

What about having your possessions put in the street for nonpayment of rent?

They're looking for unemployment compensation checks as a way of life? They have to explain this?

No, we have to get back our dignity as a Nation, and it doesn't include the gridlock that we have in the House of Representatives. Sure, getting elected is important. But fulfilling the American Dream is far more important than anything this Nation's based on.

Yes, God bless America. Yes, in God we trust. Let's hope that God trusts us.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, last week, seven former Planned Parenthood employees wrote a joint letter to the Energy and Commerce Committee detailing the facts that many of my colleagues and I have long believed to be true. Planned Parenthood is grossly misusing taxpayer funds.

These former employees revealed that clinic staff failed to properly follow correct billing procedures to prevent Federal tax dollars from being used to fund abortion services as demanded by law. They outlined other horrific violations, including failure to properly notify parents when a vulnerable young girl may have been a victim of rape and is seeking an abortion.

These former employees also wrote that abortion is indeed offered as a means of family planning, in blatant violation of Federal law. For years, we feared that Planned Parenthood was engaged in several of these abuses, and now we have the inside information from brave folks who have confirmed these fears.

In an effort to shed light on how much taxpayer money is at stake and to keep a promise I made to the people of Texas 22 when I was first elected, I requested a GAO report to give the public a full accounting of exactly how much Federal money is sent to organizations that perform abortions each year. We learned that over a 7-year period, the taxpayer price tag to these organizations is almost \$1 billion.

And last week I was further sickened to learn that, according to the former Planned Parenthood employees, between Federal and State contributions, Planned Parenthood alone receives roughly \$1 million per day of taxpayer funds. And yet they're accountable to no one, including the taxpayers who morally oppose these funds being used to end an innocent life.

I thank my Energy and Commerce colleague, Subcommittee Chairman CLIFF STEARNS, for launching an investigation into this matter. And I'm confident that the full committee will do a thorough audit of this corrupt organization. An investigation is sorely overdue.

Madam Speaker, behind me is a picture of one of the largest Planned Parenthood clinics ever built. Tragically, it's located right outside of the district I represent in Houston, Texas. It's surrounded by four low-income minority neighborhoods. Planned Parenthood's target audience.

This massive building has an entire floor dedicated to abortion services and rumored late-term abortions. And because of the seven former Planned Parenthood employees, we know doctors and clinic employees have illegally encouraged young girls to abort an unborn child as a means of family planning, all on the taxpayer dime.

Americans should be outraged to learn of this horrific and possibly illegal use of their tax dollars. Planned Parenthood must be held accountable.

I will continue to fight to cut off every single tax dollar that Planned Parenthood and similar organizations receive. We can never tire. We can never rest in our moral obligation to protect our Nation's unborn children.

□ 1050

Federal tax dollars are legally prohibited from being used for abortions. Under our Constitution, the Obama administration has a duty to enforce these laws. Under the same Constitution, the Congress has a duty to ensure that the executive branch follows the law of the land. I applaud those Americans who bravely raise their voices on behalf of innocent children who don't have one and maybe never will.

BILL OF RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, today we celebrate an action that took place 220 years ago when we passed the Bill of Rights. But I rise today to express my dismay at the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act yesterday. Not only did this bill curb our ability to keep America safe, it made a mockery of our constitutionally protected rights.

But there is a larger point about the state of this country which is worth noting. Over the past several months, this body has wasted precious time writing a defense authorization bill with so many unsavory provisions the President threatened to veto it.

National security officials from all political spectrums condemned it as dangerous and unnecessary. In the end, the bill was watered down in response to many of the serious concerns about the bill, though it did not go nearly as far as it should. The final bill still contains restrictions on transfer of Guantanamo detainees and grants the President the power to indefinitely detain without trial American citizens in military custody. It shows just how far along the slippery slope our country has moved since 9/11 in authorizing sweeping powers to the President at the expense of our civil liberties.

Let's be clear. The over-militarization of our counterterrorism efforts goes against American values and civil liberties, though some people continue to justify it through fearmongering. We saw this after the horrific events of 9/11 when President Bush signed into law the Patriot Act that dramatically expanded law enforcement agencies' ability to search telephone, email, and financial records without a court order in the name of intelligence gathering.

One section of the Patriot Act even allows the FBI to review library